

Final Report

LONG-RANGE SERVICES PLAN

FOR

THE FORT WORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

October 2003

Dubberly Associates, Inc.

ATLANTA & DENVER



TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	IV
I. INTRODUCTION	
A. Background	1
B. The Planning Process	2
C. Acknowledgments	3
II. COMMUNITY NEEDS	
A. Community Input	6
1. Focus Groups	6
2. Public meetings	7
3. Surveys	7
B. Data Collection	9
1. Market Areas	9
2. Demographics	9
C. Findings	10
1. Preferred Services	10
2. Satisfaction with Current Services	11
3. Users	13
4. Facilities	15
5. Technology	16
6. Library Data Collection and Analysis	16
III. LONG-RANGE SERVICES PLAN	
A. Service Priorities	17
1. Primary Service Priorities	17
2. Additional Service Priorities	19
B. Goals	20
C. Objectives	21

IV. RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

A. Collections	24
B. Technology	25
1. Technical Infrastructure	25
2. IT Staffing	25
3. E-Services	25
C. Facilities	26
1. Merchandising	26
2. Signage	27
3. Computers	27
4. Staff Work Areas	28
D. Staffing	28
E. Service and Resource Data	29

OVERVIEW

The services and organization of the Fort Worth Public Library will be transformed through this Long-Range Services Plan. Through its implementation, Fort Worth residents can be assured that the Library system will center on community-based priorities.

During the next three to five years, the Library system will focus its energy and resources on three service priorities selected by a community advisory committee. These service priorities respond to the input of over 3,500 residents participating in two surveys and 20 opinion gathering sessions throughout Fort Worth. The top service priorities are

- Current Topics and Titles: to help fulfill community residents' appetite for information about popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying recreational experiences.
- Lifelong Learning: to help address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities.
- Information Literacy: to help address the need for skills related to finding, evaluating, and using information effectively.

Three additional priorities will be addressed as resources permit after the top priorities receive sufficient attention. Those additional priorities are Local History and Genealogy, Cultural Awareness, and General Information.

Following the adoption of these community-based priorities, Library staff developed six service goals that will also receive attention during the next three to five years. To fulfill these goals, the staff developed objectives, tasks, and activities that will focus Library efforts during the next three years.

These efforts will concentrate first on stocking a sufficient quantity of high-demand materials in all formats for quick availability and creating inviting easy-to-use interior layouts with display shelving and helpful signage. Success in these efforts will require significant changes in the Library's internal practices.

Major improvements in the Library's technology must also receive primary attention. Forward movement in all service areas requires the updating of computer hardware and software, as well as the upgrading of data line capacity for all facilities.

This achievable Long-Range Services Plan will require effective resource reallocation.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

The Fort Worth Public Library (FWPL) celebrated its Centennial in 2001. From a single Carnegie building, it has grown into a system with two regional libraries, 12 neighborhood facilities and a newly renovated and expanded Central Library. The staff numbers more than 207, including full-time and part-time members.

The collection includes 2.8 million items. The Library has a special collection in Genealogy and Local History, as well as a Municipal Reference Center, and a partial federal and a full State of Texas document depository. In 1998, the FWPL was made the City of Fort Worth archives. It is also home to the archives of the Fort Worth and Tarrant County Black Genealogical and Historical Society.

Strong community support is given by the Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library, Inc. and The Fort Worth Public Library Foundation. However, the City of Fort Worth has primary responsibility for financially supporting the Library.

The Library, a department of the City of Fort Worth, is following in its parent body's footsteps by undertaking this Long-Range Services Plan. In August 2000, the City completed a two-year planning process by formally adopting a long-range comprehensive plan. That was the first citywide plan in more than 20 years.

The Library's planning process has been similar to that of the City's comprehensive planning effort. Both included a series of community meetings and focus groups as well as staff analysis. The City's plan, however, surveyed the City primarily from an economic and growth perspective and was not intended to be a strategic planning document for its various departments.

The Fort Worth Public Library's Long-Range Services Plan is a strategic planning effort, one that concentrates on community needs. This ambitious and energetic planning effort asked residents about their needs and then based future service priorities on their responses. The result is a plan that focuses services and operations to ensure that the needs of Fort Worth's residents are addressed.

This important planning effort by the FWPL was based on the best practices in public library planning, and its planning process followed the model outlined in *The New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach* by Sandra Nelson (American Library Association, 2001). This planning model, developed over a 20-year period by the

Public Library Association, has been used successfully across the nation. (The FWPL's planning process also generated new planning techniques for other public libraries to use.)

The Library's request for proposals also specified that consultants use a companion volume, *Managing for Results: Effective Resource Allocation for Public Libraries* by Sandra Nelson, et al. (American Library Association, 2000). These works were the framework of this planning effort. The books' authors were key members of the consulting team. Sandra Nelson facilitated the planning sessions.

The planning process resulted in a unified Long-Range Services Plan for delivering library services to Fort Worth citizens. The Plan establishes priorities for services and support activities. Its goals and measurable objectives address each service priority. Library resources will be reallocated to services, staffing, facilities, collections, and technology that address high priority goals. Best practices have been identified, tailored, and recommended by the consulting team for each service and support area.

This Long-Range Services Plan

- identifies community needs.
- enables the Library to be a more responsive City service.
- determines the most appropriate services for the Library to provide.
- helps the Library makes effective decisions about resource allocation.
- develops supportable requests for operating and capital project funding.
- focuses and assists the activities of the Library Advisory Board, The Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library, Inc., and The Fort Worth Public Library Foundation.
- focuses and supports grant applications and other funding requests.
- supports staff recruitment activities.

B. THE PLANNING PROCESS

The first phase of the planning process collected detailed demographic data about the Fort Worth community and gathered statistical information about Library services and resources. This data provided baseline information on Library use and how resources are allocated to Library services and support activities.

In the second planning phase, public opinion about community needs and Library services was sought through a variety of methods. These included an in-library survey of 2,241 users, and a telephone community survey of 1,109 users and non-users.

Many groups were convened: 14 focus groups (four outreach groups, four interest groups, and six stakeholder groups), eight public forums in City Council districts, and a Community Planning Advisory Committee. Over 3,500 residents provided input into the Long-Range Services Plan.

The third phase of the planning process established library service priorities and set goals and objectives for the next three to five years. The service priorities recommended by the Community Planning Advisory Committee were adopted by the Steering Committee for the planning process.

The Staff Planning Advisory Committee, over several months, developed goals and objectives for the highest service priorities. These, too, were reviewed by the Community Planning Advisory Committee and adopted by the Steering Committee.

The fourth phase of the project called for a broad-based Staff Planning Advisory Committee to identify tasks to fulfill the goals and achieve the objectives. Staff members were trained by the consulting team in identifying, prioritizing, and evaluating activities and tasks to accomplish established goals and objectives. The activities and tasks responded to the findings of the consulting team in the critical areas of services, staffing, facilities, collections, and technology.

In the fifth and final phase of the planning process, staff members were trained to identify the resources necessary to execute high priority activities and tasks and to develop and monitor implementation plans.

C. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The process that produced this Long-Range Services Plan involved many people. Over 3,500 Fort Worth residents contributed their ideas and opinions. The Community Planning Advisory Committee reviewed a large amount of information and recommended the Plan's service priorities. The staff of various City departments contributed ideas and opinions in focus groups. The Library's staff made many suggestions over the course of the planning process and through the Staff Planning Advisory Committee's numerous day-long work sessions. The Steering Committee studied these recommendations and approved the Long-Range Services Plan for submission to the City for final approval.

COMMUNITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Flora Maria Garcia
Barbara Holsten

Greg Jackson
Libby Lanzara

Joan Leach
Ann Rice

STAFF ACTION TEAMS

Leticia Alviar
Felisa Amos
Catherine Clyde
Phoebe DeSantis
Jacqueline Davis
Marion Edwards
Ken Griffitts

Barb Grisell
Loretta Hart
Brenda Hawkins
Rhonda Herd
Lillian Hickman
Ken Hopkins
Shannon King
Lynn Klein

Roy Krymis
Tracy Lane
Kathy Malone
Rhonda Prestidge
Roberta Schenewerk
Thelma Stone
Cheryl Thomas

STAFF PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Claire Abraham	Central Public Services
Frances Allen	Neighborhood Services
Leticia Alviar	Neighborhood Services
Eric Fry	Central Public Services
John Gonzales	Neighborhood Services
Virginia Gonzalez	Central Public Services
Kathleen Heath	Neighborhood Services
Bonnie Hodges	Central Public Services
Cheryl Houze	Administration
Debby Jeroslow	Central Public Services
Brenda Lanche	Neighborhood Services
Gayle Mays	Central Public Services
Edward McCree	Collection Management/Computer Services
Jane McLaughlin	Central Public Services
Ruth Montgomery	Collection Management
Robert Rankin	Neighborhood Services
Coco Robinson	Neighborhood Services
Wynette Schwalm	Neighborhood Services
Mary Sikes	Central Public Services
Sallie Swank	Collection Management
Brenda Talley	Neighborhood Services
Karen Van Leuvan	Administration
Beth Walters	Collection Management

PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE

Marsha Anderson	Public Information Officer, Fort Worth Public Library.
Tom Armstrong	Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library, Inc.
Danita Barber	Neighborhood Services Administrator, Fort Worth Public Library.
Dana Burghdoff	Assistant Director, City of Fort Worth Planning Department.
Bob Crow	The Fort Worth Public Library Foundation.
Cate Dixon	Assistant Director, Fort Worth Public Library.
Deborah Duke	Collection Management Administrator, Fort Worth Public Library.
Bunny Gardner	President, Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library.
Kristin Glass	Management Analyst, City of Fort Worth.
Wayne Gray	Central Library Administrator, Fort Worth Public Library.
Michael Haney	The Fort Worth Public Library Foundation.
Tessie Hutson	Administrative Assistant, Fort Worth Public Library.
Eugene Merritt	Human Resources Consultant, City of Fort Worth Human Resources Department.
Joe Paniagua	Assistant City Manager, City of Fort Worth.
Betsy Pepper	Executive Director, The Fort Worth Public Library Foundation.
Dr. Gleniece Robinson	Director, Fort Worth Public Library.
Marisol Trevizo	Assistant to the City Manager, City of Fort Worth.
Sandra Whitmire	Chair, Fort Worth Public Library Advisory Board.
Karen Van Leuvan	Administrative Services Manager, Fort Worth Public Library.
Kate Yarhouse	Assistant Director, IT Solutions Dept. City of Fort Worth.

The consulting team appreciated working with so many Fort Worth residents and City staff members to help create this Long-Range Services Plan. We are especially indebted to Library Director Dr. Gleniece Robinson for this professional opportunity and her leadership and to Deborah Duke, Library Collection Development Administrator, who ably served as planning project manager.

DUBBERLY ASSOCIATES, INC.

Consulting Team Members

Estelle Black	June Garcia
Maria Champlin	Jeanne Goodrich
Yolanda Cuesta	Diane Mayo
George D'Elia, Ph.D.	Sandra Nelson
Kenneth Dubberly	Charles W. Robinson

Ronald Dubberly, Lead Consultant

II. COMMUNITY NEEDS

This Long-Range Services Plan is grounded in the needs of Fort Worth's residents. The planning process was designed to identify community needs. The plan was prepared to respond to those needs.

Community needs were identified by obtaining resident input, examining library use patterns, and analyzing demographic data. The results of these opinion and data gathering efforts were used to establish service priorities for the next three to five years.

A. COMMUNITY INPUT

The opinions of Fort Worth residents about community needs and library services contributed significantly to this Master Services Plan. Their input was sought and received through a wide variety of methods and locations. The methods included focus groups, public meetings, an in-library survey of users, a telephone community survey of users and non-users, and a citizens' advisory planning committee. Over 3,500 residents participated in developing this plan.

1. Focus Groups

Fourteen focused discussion sessions were held to discover opinions about the needs of Fort Worth residents and the ways in which the Library might address those needs. The focus groups were designed to obtain opinions from a diverse audience, with sessions tailored to solicit a broad range of opinions from a specific interest group. Participants were also asked by the consultants for their opinions about the quality of existing services and their relevance to community needs.

The interest areas of the fourteen focus groups were:

- Business community
- City departments
- City Manager's office
- Cultural organizations
- Educational community
- Ethnic leaders
- Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library, Inc.
- Library Advisory Board

- Neighborhood associations
 - East Regional Library
 - Southwest Regional Library
- Senior citizens
 - Eastern Sector
 - Western Sector
- Service providers to persons with disabilities
- The Fort Worth Public Library Foundation.

Summaries were made of the focused group discussions. These summaries were placed on the Library's Web site and distributed to members of the Citizens Planning Advisory Committee and Library staff. The information was used by the Committee and staff in developing service priorities, goals, objectives, and activities.

2. Public Meetings

Eight community forum discussions were conducted by the consulting team. The discussions were held during September 2002 in each City Council district. Sixty-three residents participated in the sessions. The public meetings, including bilingual sessions, were conducted by consulting team members Estelle Black, Maria Champlin and Yolanda Cuesta.

Most of the participants were fairly active library users who were knowledgeable about the Library system overall. Most participants reported that they regularly use more than one library in the system and are willing to go to the library that has the resources they need. Participants were aware of the differences in facilities, services, and collection strengths among the branches.

3. Surveys

Two types of surveys were conducted to reach library users and nonusers: a community telephone survey and an in-library user survey. The community telephone survey yielded planning data about community needs and interests, based on residents' opinions about their library service needs and current and possible library services. The in-library survey provided more detailed information. Both surveys were conducted in English and Spanish and were restricted to persons 18 years of age or older.

The surveys were conducted by consulting team member Dr. George D'Elia, the Director of the Center for Applied Research in Library and Information Science and a professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

a. In-library User Survey

The in-library user survey was designed to yield the level of a sampling error (reliability) desired by the Library. The sample of 2,241 completed survey responses gave the results a margin of error of approximately plus or minus 2.1 percent. The survey was conducted by volunteers and Library staff.

The objectives for the user survey were to:

- Describe demographic characteristics of library users and compare them to those of nonusers obtained from a nonuser survey.
- Identify reasons why users utilize the FWPL.
- Measure users' satisfaction with the FWPL.
- Obtain users' evaluations of the Library service characteristics and to relate these evaluations to the users' satisfaction with the FWPL.
- Assess users' opinions about their likelihood of using possible new or improved services at the FWPL.
- Assess users' opinions about a variety of issues, including financial support for the FWPL, importance of the FWPL to the quality of life in Fort Worth, importance to users of various sources of news about the community, and estimate users' access to the Internet outside of the access available in the FWPL.

b. Telephone Community Survey

The community telephone survey of nonusers utilized a random digit dialing process to contact and interview randomly selected adult residents (age 18 years or older) of the City of Fort Worth. The interviews were conducted by a firm using computer-assisted interviewing technology. This process enables the interviewer to digitally record the respondent's answers, which are then downloaded into the project's digital data file. The sample of 1,109 respondents gave the results a margin of error of approximately plus or minus three percent.

The primary purpose of the telephone community survey was to obtain information about city residents who do not use the Fort Worth Public Library. Objectives for the survey of non-users were to:

- Estimate the percentage of adult residents of Fort Worth who use the FWPL and the percentage of adult residents who do not use the FWPL.
- Describe the demographic characteristics of the nonusers.
- Identify reasons why residents do not use the FWPL.

- Assess nonuser residents' opinions about a variety of issues, including their likelihood of using possible new services or improved services of the FWPL; the value of the FWPL; and financial support of the FWPL.
- Ascertain nonuser residents' sources of community news and Internet access.

B. DATA COLLECTION

The consultant team collected and analyzed data about the library market areas for each FWPL facility and the demographic characteristics for those market areas. This market area information, along with survey data, will enable the staff in each library facility to tailor services to specific community needs and interests. The user density maps, service area maps and demographic profiles were prepared by consultant team member Kenneth Dubberly of public-library.com.

1. Market Areas

a. User Density Maps

Maps showing the geographic distribution of the majority of each library's borrowers and the Library system as a whole were produced as a planning tool. Maps showing the density of use were generated for a variety of categories. These maps reveal the impact of travel patterns, natural and constructed barriers such as rivers and highways, shopping districts, schools and population density. Maps were produced by service unit and for the entire Library system.

The maps displayed geographical patterns for cardholders and borrowers of materials during the sample period. The maps do not identify specific library users.

b. Service Area Maps

These maps illustrate the use of each branch library in the FWPL system by showing the geographical distribution of borrowers during a sample period. The maps were prepared using data from the density map process and the U.S. Census Bureau. The service area maps are based on clusters of block groups from the 2000 U.S. Census.

2. Demographics

A demographic profile was prepared for each branch library's service area. The profile was based on census block group data from the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau.

These profiles of demographic characteristics can be used by branch staff in designing services, collections, and facilities that respond to the needs of their service areas.

C. FINDINGS

1. Preferred Services

More new materials (books, videos, CDs, DVDs, and books on tape) was the highest service priority improvements for library users and non-users. This theme was clear in the two surveys, public forums, and other input sessions with Fort Worth residents.

When asked about new and improved services, in the user survey conducted by Dr. D'Elia, the following percentages of library users indicated they would be either "very likely" or "extremely likely" to borrow:

- 78.8 % more books and best sellers
- 75.0 % more movie videotapes
- 64.3 % more music CDs
- 64.1 % more instructional videotapes
- 63.5 % more books on tape
- 62.2 % more DVDs
- 61.8 % more books on CDs.

Other services and service improvements that users reported as being either "very likely" or "extremely likely" to use were:

- 56.3 % online reference service--around-the-clock and seven days weekly
- 56.0 % more computers for personal research
- 53.1 % coffee shops in the library
- 52.3 % more materials for students (k-12) to support homework.

Overall, users 18 years of age and older reported the following reasons for using the Fort Worth Public Library:

- 73.67 % Came to borrow materials for enjoyment
- 67.20 % Came to browse and spend time in the library
- 51.49% Came to find information that I needed

44.22%	Came to research personal projects.
32.31 %	Brought children to borrow other books
31.55 %	Came to find information about personal interests
30.43 %	Came to search the Internet
29.36 %	Came to study or to do school research
25.35 %	Brought children to do school work.

Statistically significant differences were reported for use by Hispanic, African-American and White non-Hispanic segments of Fort Worth's population. In general, the results of the user survey reveal that a higher percentage of White non-Hispanic users are “borrowers and browsers” than Hispanic, African-American, Native American or Asian users. Other statistically significant differences were also found among the various ethnic and racial segments.

2. Satisfaction with Current Services

Of the users surveyed, over three-quarters (77.7 percent) reported that they were either “very satisfied” or “extremely satisfied” with the Library. The level of satisfaction is among the highest reported in many public library surveys conducted by Dr. D'Elia. This fact, along with the high user satisfaction level with FWPL staff, reflects very favorably upon the Library system.

A majority of the nonusers (53 percent) indicated that not having time to use the library is a reason for why they do not use the FWPL. In Fort Worth, like other locations, lifestyle is a primary reason people do not use the library. Twenty-nine percent said that the library does not offer anything they need. Another 26 percent said they preferred to use the Internet. About 22 percent said the library is too far away.

The overall users' evaluations of the service characteristics of the Fort Worth Public Library were relatively high, as compared with other urban public libraries. The evaluations for specific service characteristics for all libraries in the system are listed below in ranked order. The percentages are for users who evaluated the characteristic as “excellent.”

69.45 %	Cleanliness of the library
67.62 %	Staff helpfulness in finding materials
64.43 %	Approachability of staff for assistance
63.64 %	Availability of staff for assistance
55.11%	Children's programs

55.04 %	Safety in and around library
53.86 %	Atmosphere for reading and studying
53.22 %	Availability of children's books
50.16 %	Availability of computers for the catalog
49.36 %	Accessibility for disabled users
46.36 %	Availability of computers for the Internet
46.33 %	Ease of finding materials
46.00 %	Availability of materials for homework
45.05 %	Helpfulness of signs
44.72 %	Ease of searching catalog-databases
41.26 %	Availability of information I need
41.18 %	Availability of training on computers
40.99 %	Convenience of library hours
36.05 %	Availability of items to check out
35.93 %	Availability of new books
33.86 %	Adult programs.

The ten service characteristics that are most important to overall user satisfaction with the Fort Worth Public Library, in ranked order, are:

- Availability of needed information
- Availability of items to check out
- Availability of training on computers
- Availability of materials for homework
- Availability of computers for Internet
- Ease of finding materials
- Availability of staff for assistance
- Ease of searching catalog/databases
- Approachability of staff for assistance
- Availability of computers for the catalog.

Of these most important service characteristics, only two received an “excellent” rating by more than 51 percent of the users of the Fort Worth Public Library: the availability and approachability of staff. All other “top ten” service characteristics rated as most important to overall satisfaction fell far short of “excellent” ratings.

Most notable were the relatively few “excellent” ratings for the categories of availability of materials and information, ease in finding materials, and the availability of computers and related training. This means that the in-library user survey results reveal that the Library system is most deficient in three highly important service areas: materials, technology, and information.

3. Users

The data from the user and nonuser surveys conducted by Dr. D'Elia provide useful information for the library. Comparisons of user and nonuser demographics reveal significant differences between these two groups. Some of the general comparisons are:

- Users tend to be younger than nonusers.
- There are more users than nonusers among Hispanics and African-Americans.
- There are more nonusers than users in households where English is not the primary language.
- Users tend to have more years of education than nonusers.
- A higher percentage of users than nonusers are employed.
- A higher percentage of nonusers than users are retired.
- Users tend to live in households with higher incomes than nonusers.
- A higher percentage of users are female.

a. User Demographic Characteristics

The user survey conducted by Dr. D'Elia produced valuable information about the general demographic characteristics of FWPL users. This data, along with the demographic profiles for each branch produced by Kenneth Dubberly, of public-library.com, has provided the Library with a large amount of detailed information about library user characteristics.

A comparison of ethnic and racial characteristics of the Library's users with that of Fort Worth's general population shows that the percentage of library users varies greatly among the groups. Details of these variations are shown in the following table “Hispanic and Racial Ancestry of Users and General Population.”

Hispanic and Racial Ancestry of Users and General Population		
Ancestry	General Population	Percentage of Users
African-American, not Hispanic	20.3%	16.8%
Asian, not Hispanic	2.6%	2.5%
Hispanic	29.8%	20.8%
Native American, not Hispanic	0.6%	0.7%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	--
White, not Hispanic	59.7%	49.4%
Other	14.7%	2.6%
Did not respond		7.2%

This table shows that the Library is reaching a smaller proportion of Fort Worth's Hispanic population than in the African-American and White non-Hispanic segments. Asian and Native American segments have the highest user representations among Fort Worth's ethnic and racial groups.

b. Underserved Areas

The scope of work for the planning process to develop this Long-Range Services Plan focused on setting priorities for future library services and utilizing existing resources to address those priorities. However, the information that described the present market areas for Fort Worth Public Library facilities also revealed areas of the City where there are lower percentages of residents who borrow library materials.

These “underserved” areas, containing one or more census block groups, are scattered throughout the City, which is not geographically compact and has very irregular boundaries. Fort Worth's central area contains several census block groups with relatively low borrower density. Larger geographical areas, with borrowing activity lower than in the central area, are in the far north, northwest, northeast, far south, and southwest portions of the City. Many of these five areas have population densities that are significantly lower than other parts of the city.

These areas of relatively low borrower use require additional study to determine which service delivery methods would be most effective in reaching their residents. A master facilities planning effort would compare the feasibility of combining traditional branch libraries with other service delivery methods and offer specific recommendations.

The most likely service delivery options to be explored in a master facilities study include providing:

- “pocket libraries” targeted to specific age groups, especially children or seniors, that are within walking distance.
- “shared space” service locations with small collections oriented to high-demand materials and electronic access to other library resources.
- bookmobiles that offer small on-board collections and access to system-wide collections, including electronic resources.
- mobile computer labs to provide online access to the Library's electronic resources and the Internet, and training in electronic information literacy skills.
- traditional branch libraries for communities with sufficient population and distance from other branches.

4. Facilities

Consultant team member Charles W. Robinson visited each branch facility to provide the Fort Worth Public Library with a general overview of conditions in comparison with the service goals and priorities established in the planning process. All of the facilities are physically well maintained, which is unusual for municipal buildings. They reflect the architecture of the era in which they were built, and the average age is younger than that of buildings in many other jurisdictions. No study was made concerning their locations with regard to demographics, but all seem to have adequate parking for the use that they receive. The exterior signage is adequate. All facilities except BOLD and COOL—which are special purpose facilities, have easy access from main streets.

All branches, with the exception of the two regional libraries, lack adequate space for behind-the-scenes activities. They have small workrooms and staff rooms. Office space for essential staff tasks is almost non-existent.

Most of the facilities have no meeting rooms. This lack severely limits providing story hours and program events. There are no computer labs such as the one in the Central Library, or even dedicated areas for this function.

None of the branch libraries is equipped with adequate shelving for merchandising and displaying materials. Likewise, the layouts of most branch libraries are too crowded, especially with shelving that houses seldom-used materials. Internal signage is seriously lacking in location, quantity and type of language.

The Central Library is a special case. Although this facility contains fine meeting rooms and exhibit space, most of the building's interior has the look and feel of an art gallery rather than a public library. Users are greeted by cavernous spaces nearly devoid of library materials, warm colors or helpful signage. Access to the “library” portions of the facility requires long walks. Even access to the children's area, an oasis of color and activity on the ground floor, requires a circuitous journey. To reach the adult collections and services on the lower level, an elevator ride or a walk down a staircase is necessary after a long hike. Some of these problems can be addressed through relatively inexpensive ground floor improvements such as using display shelving for popular materials, installing signage and creating access paths, and utilizing the space now reserved as an art gallery.

5. Technology

Technology throughout the system is seriously under-configured for modern public library services. The present configuration is not effective in delivering needed library services and is inefficient for support staff tasks. Detailed findings in the technology area were developed by consulting team member Diane Mayo.

The integrated library system (ILS) that is the backbone of library operations—including inventory control, the online catalog, and links to electronic resources—is underpowered and outdated for even basic public library service. The capacity of data lines is very inadequate in most facilities, with the bandwidth available per user less than that found in most homes with computers. Most of the Library's computers are out-of-date, with 94 percent over three years-old and 57 percent over five years-old. Also, their number is insufficient in most branches. Many of the software applications available for public use and training are out-of-date, with some no longer available for purchase over the counter. The Fort Worth Public Library cannot move into the 21st century without upgrading all aspects of its technology.

6. Library Data Collection and Analysis

Detailed analysis of internal library data by consulting team member Jeanne Goodrich revealed the need for systematic upgrades in the types and accuracy of data collected and improvements in utilizing data for measuring trends and progress.

III. LONG-RANGE SERVICES PLAN

Four key assumptions drove the process for this Long-Range Services Plan:

- Service priorities are essential for effective service delivery and resource use.
- Service priorities must be based on community needs.
- Existing resources must be reallocated to the top service priorities.
- Additional resources will be scarce during the next three years.

This Long-Range Services Plan for public library services is based on the needs of Fort Worth's residents. These needs were expressed through two surveys and 24 resident input sessions. After service priorities based on community needs were established, the Library staff developed goals and measurable objectives to address those priorities.

The staff also developed many behind-the-scenes tasks and activities that will be undertaken over the next three years to accomplish those objectives. This section of the Final Report lists the service priorities, goals, and objectives for the Long-Range Services Plan.

A. SERVICE PRIORITIES

Based on survey results and public input sessions, the Community Planning Advisory Committee selected six service priorities to be the focus of the Fort Worth Public Library during the next three to five years. These six service priorities were recommended by the Citizen Planning Advisory Committee, which viewed them as two sets--one primary and the other secondary. The Planning Steering Committee endorsed this recommendation. During the period covered by this Master Services Plan, Library system efforts will concentrate on these six service priorities, especially the top three.

1. Primary Service Priorities

During the next three years, primary attention and resources will be directed to three service priorities:

- Current Topics and Titles
- Lifelong Learning
- Information Literacy.

Collections, facilities, equipment, staffing, technology, and support practices will focus on creating responsive services to address these three priorities, especially the highest priority of Current Topics and Titles.

a. Current Topics and Titles

A library that provides Current Topics and Titles helps to fulfill residents' appetite for information about popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying recreational experiences. The Library system will quickly meet customer requests, especially those from adults, for high demand titles by having sufficient copies at all locations. Each library's collection will be shaped on the basis of local demand. The collections will be organized and displayed so users can easily find materials of interest. Staff will give expert guidance to users and be aware of best selling print and audiovisual titles, their content, and the style of their authors and performers.

b. Lifelong Learning

Lifelong Learning services as a service priority means that the library helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities. In responding to this service need, the Library system will offer an extensive collection of circulating materials and electronic resources on a wide variety of topics, including those that support children in completing their homework assignments. The collections at the Central Library will address this service priority for its customers and support branch library user needs. Electronic resources will be provided to on-site users at all libraries and to off-site users through the Internet. Staff working with collections that support Lifelong Learning will be knowledgeable in locating resources in all formats.

c. Information Literacy

A library that provides Information Literacy services helps address the need for skills related to finding, evaluating, and using information effectively. The Library system will provide training and instruction, especially for adults, in skills for locating, evaluating, and using information resources. Staff will be knowledgeable about the ways in which people learn and seek information. As space and equipment permit, training for groups, classes and individuals (including spontaneous one-on-one sessions) will be provided by available staff.

2. Additional Service Priorities

Three additional service priorities will also receive special attention as resources permit. The three second-tier service priorities are:

- Local History and Genealogy
- Cultural Awareness
- General Information.

a. Local History and Genealogy

Local History and Genealogy services by the Library will address residents' desire to know and better understand personal or community heritage. The Library will maintain its present collection of specialized materials and other resources related to the history of Fort Worth, its City government, and the genealogy of its residents. During the period included in this Long-Range Services Plan, the Fort Worth Public Library will strive to maintain its current level of support in this service area.

b. Cultural Awareness

A library that offers Cultural Awareness service helps satisfy the desire of residents to gain an understanding of their own and others' cultural heritage. During the initial period of this plan, the Library will focus on ensuring that signage, brochures, program events, collections and other services, exhibits, and staff language abilities appropriately reflect the diversity of Fort Worth's population. In this context, the Library system will provide programs and displays as well as materials and resources in various formats that reflect the cultural heritages of Fort Worth's diverse population.

c. General Information

General Information services help meet the need for information and answers to questions on a broad array of topics related to work, school, and personal life. The Library system will continue to provide general information to Fort Worth's residents. During the period of this Long-Range Services Plan, the Library's efforts in this area will focus on providing this service as efficiently as possible. The Library will offer print and electronic resources and audiovisual materials that address a broad variety of topics. The Library's staff will be skillful in identifying user needs and in locating pertinent information to satisfy those needs. Internet access will be provided for staff and public use.

B. GOALS

After the Community Planning Advisory Committee analyzed community needs and selected library service responses, Library staff developed six service goals (listed below) for the period of this Long-Range Services Plan. These service goals, related to the six service priorities, describe the outcomes to be received by Fort Worth's residents as a result of the services provided by the Library.

Goal One

Adults in Fort Worth will have the high-demand, high-interest materials they want in appropriate languages, formats, and programs when and where they want them.

Goal Two

Children and Teens (ages 5-17) in Fort Worth will have materials, programs, and services that stimulate their imaginations and provide a wide variety of leisure activities and experiences.

Goal Three

Preschool children (ages 0-5) in Fort Worth will develop a lifelong love of books, reading, and learning.

Goal Four

Adults in Fort Worth will have a wide variety of culturally sensitive services and materials that support lifelong learning and self-directed personal growth and development.

Goal Five

Children and teens (ages 5-17) in Fort Worth will have the information they need to supplement and enrich their formal education and to pursue their personal interests.

Goal Six

Adults in Fort Worth will have easy access to services and programs that help them find, evaluate, and use information effectively.

C. OBJECTIVES

Twenty-one objectives will measure the Library's progress toward reaching its service goals during the period of this Long-Range Services Plan. Each objective includes a measure, a standard against which the measure is compared, and a date or period by which the standard is to be met. All of these performance objectives are written in terms of what users will receive from the Library.

Goal 1: Adults in Fort Worth will have the high-demand, high-interest materials they want in appropriate languages, formats, and programs when and where they want them.

Objective 1.1: By 2003/04, the circulation of adult bestsellers, fiction, and media materials will increase from 1,710,797 to 1,967,500 and will increase by five percent each subsequent year.

Objective 1.2: By 2003/2004, 80 percent of the adults who place a reserve on a bestseller (print and non-print) will have the item available within 14 days of street date.

Objective 1.3: By 2003/2004, 80 percent of the adults who place a reserve on an item in the general collection will have the item available within 10 days.

Objective 1.4: By 2005/06, 95 percent of the adults who came to the Library to "find something good to read, view or listen to" will say they found something that met their needs during their visit.

Goal 2: Children and Teens (ages 5-17) in Fort Worth will have materials, programs, and services that stimulate their imaginations and provide a wide variety of leisure activities and experiences.

Objective 2.1: By 2003/04, the circulation of children's fiction, media, and popular nonfiction topics will increase from 843,053 to 970,000 and will increase by five percent each subsequent year.

Objective 2.2: By 2003/04, attendance at children's programs sponsored or cosponsored by the Library will have increased by 25 percent over the previous year.

Objective 2.3: By 2003/04, the circulation of teen materials will increase by 10 percent over the previous year and will continue to increase by three percent each subsequent year.

Objective 2.4: By 2004/05, attendance at teen programs sponsored or cosponsored by the Library will have increased by seven percent over the previous year.

Goal 3: Preschool children (ages 0-5) in Fort Worth will develop a lifelong love of books, reading, and learning.

Objective 3.1: By 2003/04, attendance by children and caregivers at preschool programs sponsored or cosponsored by the Library will have increased by 15 percent, and will increase by seven percent each subsequent year.

Objective 3.2: By 2004/05, the circulation of picture books will increase from 215,000 per year to 247,250 per year, and will increase by six percent each subsequent year.

Goal 4: Adults in Fort Worth will have a wide variety of culturally sensitive services and materials that support lifelong learning and self-directed personal growth and development.

Objective 4.1: By 2005/06, the annual circulation of adult nonfiction materials will increase from 448,000 to 492,800.

Objective 4.2: By 2004/05, the Library's adult Web pages will be visited at least 1.4 million times and the number of page visits will increase by 100,000 each subsequent year.

Objective 4.3: By 2005/06, attendance at adult programs sponsored or cosponsored by the Library will increase by 10 percent over the previous year.

Goal 5: Children and teens (ages 5-17) in Fort Worth will have the information they need to supplement and enrich their formal education and to pursue their personal interests.

Objective 5.1: By 2003/04, 25 percent of the children and teens in Fort Worth will have a library card, and that percentage will increase each subsequent year by 5 percent.

Objective 5.2: By 2003/04, the circulation of children's nonfiction material will have increased from 209,000 to 240,500 annually.

Objective 5.3: By 2004/2005, the Library's children's Web pages will be visited at least 47,000 times per year, and the Library's teen Web pages will be visited at least 15,000 times per year; and the number of the Library's children's; teens' Web page visits on each will increase by 2,000 each subsequent year.

Goal 6: Adults in Fort Worth will have easy access to services and programs that help them find, evaluate, and use information effectively.

Objective 6.1: By 2005/06 4,000 adult users will attend computer classes sponsored or cosponsored by the Library and 90 percent of users will indicate on the post-class evaluation form that the programs met their needs.

Objective 6.2: By 2005/06, 2,000 senior users (ages 60+) will attend computer classes sponsored or co-sponsored by the Library and 90 percent of those seniors will indicate on the post-evaluation form that the programs met their needs.

Objective 6.3: By 2005/06, 1,000 people who speak English as a second language will attend computer classes sponsored or cosponsored by the Library that are offered in their native language, and 90 percent of those users will indicate on a post-class evaluation form that the programs met their needs.

Objective 6.4: By 2005/06, 95 percent of sampled adults who use the Library's technology resources will indicate that those resources met their needs.

IV. RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

This section gives recommendations for technical and operations practices for the Fort Worth Public Library. They are common practices followed by successful libraries across the nation.

These recommendations were developed through consultant team analyses of the Library's operations and facilities. The recommendations are grouped into five categories: collections, technology, staffing, facilities, and service and resource utilization data. These recommendations, while based on general "best practices" in the library industry, have been tailored to address the service priorities and operating environment of the Fort Worth Public Library.

These recommendations should be implemented as soon as it is practical to do so, thereby improving service delivery effectiveness and resource utilization efficiency.

A. COLLECTIONS

The collection of materials in Fort Worth's public libraries is the core resource of its top service response. Practice recommendations for this critical area were developed by consulting team member Charles W. Robinson.

1. Collections should serve the needs and wants of users and potential users--not a librarian's notion as to what users *should* be reading.
2. The Library should serve the wants and needs of the average user, with some variance on either side of "average."
3. The Library needs to duplicate popular titles (those in high-demand) rather than concentrate on titles that receive very limited use by the public.
4. Experienced selectors are needed by the Library for effective selection, with attention paid to the branches' differing clientele.
5. Materials in Spanish or other community languages must be provided in those branches that serve communities containing a significant number of people who speak languages other than English.

B. TECHNOLOGY

Practice recommendations for technology are grouped into three categories: technical infrastructure, IT staffing, and E-services. These recommended practices were developed by consulting team member Diane Mayo.

1. Technical Infrastructure

- a. Update or acquire a new integrated computer library system (ILS) to provide on-site and off-site users with robust access to the online public access catalog, electronic information resources, and other electronic library services now standard for most public library users in the nation.
- b. Develop and deploy a limited number of software application sets (ideally no more than three) to the staff and public: one for staff and two for the public (one for children's computers and one for adult computers).
- c. Provide a standard set of services to the public throughout the Library, regardless of the electronic device a customer uses.
- d. Ensure that every PC is connected to a printer and that every staff PC on public desks is connected to at least two printers. There should be no single point of failure that can inhibit the delivery of public service at staff desks.
- e. Proceed with the plan to upgrade the Data General server and PCs.
- f. Invest in additional wide area network bandwidth.
- g. Apply for E-rate funding to relieve costs of upgrading the wide area network.

2. IT Staffing

- a. Assess the technical IT skills needed and plan to acquire them. It is critical that the Library not commit to providing services it cannot support.
- b. Commit time and money to maintaining the IT staff's skills. The speed with which technology changes and the rapidly evolving list of library services that employ technology as a delivery component mandate that Library IT staff continuously refresh and expand their skills.
- c. Develop a project management approach to IT tasks. Clearly define, at the beginning of each project, timelines, needed resources, and staff responsibilities. Project plans and priorities should not be changed unless warranted by a major environmental shift or emergency.

3. E- Services

Electronic services are different from in-library services, although the user's needs are usually the same. In-library services are often mediated by staff who help users

frame their questions and provide contexts for retrieving information or materials. In-library self-service also is mediated to some extent by signage and the physical arrangement of materials in Library buildings. An effective electronic service delivery program should include the following steps:

- a. Treat the Web site as an electronic branch. The Library's Web site is a service outlet just as the physical libraries. It needs a service administrator and staff in the same way that branch libraries have branch heads and staff.
- b. Build user assistance into e-services. Users value the assistance they receive from staff in using the Library and its resources; therefore, assistance needs to be designed into the Library's e-services as well.
- c. Integrate print and electronic resources. Surveys of Web and library usage demonstrate that most users of one approach are users of the other. The Library's Web site should include multi-level links among all Library resources.
- d. Expand e-service offerings that support the Library's priority service responses and that are most likely to interest users and potential users.
- e. Support in-library users as well as off-site users, especially users of smaller branches by making: (1) the e-branch an extension of their limited reference collections and magazine holdings; and (2) providing synchronous digital reference services.
- f. Train digital services staff in skills needed to provide expanded technology-based services to customers, especially for off-site users. Special training is needed for staff involved in asynchronous, e-mail reference, and virtual service delivery.

C. FACILITIES

Library facilities must be designed, organized, and equipped to continuously support service priorities as they change over time in response to evolving community needs. These practice recommendations were developed by consulting team member Charles W. Robinson for the service goals and priorities in this Long-Range Services Plan.

1. Merchandising

- a. Purchase and install display fixtures for every full-service branch, including new book displays of current fiction, non-fiction and other popular materials, and older titles.
 - i. Immediately purchase and install a modest number of lower-height fixtures in all branches to display the collection and attract use.

- ii. Replace existing shelving with display shelving. It is estimated that even with a reduction in collection size, the annual turnover of the remaining collection would at least double.
- b. Library staff should receive training in merchandising techniques.
- c. Assign merchandising responsibility to at least one person in each branch.

2. Signage

The lack of signage in the interior of the branches seriously hinders users in finding a particular subject or title or running across some book or video or children's book which attracts interest.

- a. A Systemwide policy should be adopted for most types of interior signage.
- b. Signage should lead from the general to the specific. It should be attractive, with one design theme used throughout the building.
- c. Signage should be easily changed and updated as conditions warrant.
- d. Signs in Spanish or other community languages should be provided in branches serving communities with a significant number of residents who speak languages other than English.
- e. All displays of materials, whether permanent or temporary, should have their own signs to indicate the content of the display. This is an essential part of merchandising.
- f. There should be much more signage in the stack areas on the end-panels and at right angles to the faces of the shelves to indicate where specific subjects can be found.
- g. The most cost-effective method of creating signage is through a centralized process, with requests by branches rapidly fulfilled. Staff responsible for creating signage should periodically look at each branch from a total signage point of view, updating and replacing as necessary.
- h. Centrally-produced signs and displays should also be provided for programs such as the summer reading club, holidays and other special observances.

3. Computers

- a. Space for public access computers should be added to the branches if they are expanded.
- b. Computer laboratories should be added to the branches if they are expanded.

4. Staff Work Areas

- a. Modular work stations should be installed in branch libraries' staff work areas as soon as possible to organize space and workflow more efficiently.
- b. Adequate work space for behind-the-scenes activities should be added to the branches if they are expanded.

D. STAFFING

Recommended practices for staffing allocations and workloads, job specifications, compensation levels, and staff development were generated by consulting team member Jeanne Goodrich. A selected list of staffing-related practices follows.

1. Analyze the Library's high-performance facilities and apply transferable work practices to other facilities.
2. Develop and utilize work load measures for allocating staff throughout the Library System, rebalancing staffing periodically.
3. Identify the future service priorities and System-support roles of the Central Library and allocate resources accordingly.
4. Conduct a formal needs assessment process, then develop and implement a training plan to provide the skills and competencies necessary to implement the Long-Range Services Plan.
5. Ensure that job specifications are reviewed regularly for competencies required by priorities identified in the Long-Range Services Plan and revise as needed.
6. Recruit, select, train and implement staff development activities according to competencies required to execute the Long-Range Services Plan.
7. Review pay level relationships for all positions to help ensure equitable compensation among Library positions and with other City positions.
8. Participate actively in the City's compensation review process to ensure that factor analysis and market pricing approaches address the Library's requirements and recruiting realities.

E. SERVICE AND RESOURCE DATA

Recommended practices for collecting and utilizing Library statistics and service trends and for making internal and external comparisons were developed by consulting team member Jeanne Goodrich. A selected list of practices related to service and resource data follows.

1. Standardize the collecting and reporting of Library data so that it is accurate, useful and consistent with regulations and best practices.
2. Collect and utilize data that is pertinent to the effective achievement of Library goals and objectives and stop collecting unneeded data.
3. Develop standardized report forms and analysis tools so that pertinent data is available to and useable by managers and staff throughout the Library System.
4. Analyze trends in library resource use by the public and compare them with the Library's allocation of its resources for public use and staff support.